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February 13, 2019

Ronald Vitiello

Acting Director

Immigration and Customs Enforcement

500 12th St, SW

Washington, D.C. 20536

Dear Acting Director Vitiello:

As Members of the Congressional Black Caucus (CBC), we are writing to express our concern about the heightened immigration rhetoric and its corresponding destructive policy outcomes in Georgia and throughout the United States. Since the beginning of President Trump's administration, millions of immigrants who proudly call this country home live in perpetual fear of being detained and deported. What's worse, the far reach of this action is indiscriminate and knows no bounds. Working immigrants, many of whom are Black, have been surgically targeted by Immigration and Customs Enforcement's (ICE) dragnet. The most recent targeted operation to arrest and detain Grammy-Award Nominee She'ya Bin Abraham-Joseph, also known as "21 Savage", is merely the latest example of this growing problem.

The amplified enforcement phenomenon witnessed in Georgia over the past two years is directly tied to President Trump's desire to reshape and manipulate the immigration system to fulfill far right ideological goals. An emerging immigration population, coupled with a series of actions rich with xenophobia and fear, have placed Atlanta in ICE's crosshairs. According to a recent report, the city's regional ICE field office has disproportionately employed aggressive enforcement tactics and excessively punitive legal measures. Even more worrisome are reports of deplorable detention conditions, at times leading to death. In the most developed nation on Earth, there is simply no rationale to justify what we are seeing today. While Mr. Abraham-Joseph's case shed light on the harsh realities of detention for an individual and his financially dependent family members, we cannot overstate the sheer size and scope of human devastation ICE's enforcement-centric immigration policy has produced.

ICE's emphasis on fear is regularly deployed to sow seeds of anxiety in immigrant communities across the nation. In Atlanta, that is especially true and was confirmed when the Director of its regional office stated, "if you're in this country illegally, you should be scared. We're probably going to come knocking at some point." For incarcerated immigrants, the consequences of indefinite detention and potential deportation manifest themselves in a myriad of ways. For Mr. Abraham-Joseph, his

detention deprived him from his ability to contribute to his family and the community; both of whom are reliant upon his financial support and philanthropy, respectively. For others less fortunate, it can lead to broken families, economic despair, and mental health deterioration in both the detainee and his or her family.

Whether an immigrant is a Grammy-nominated artist or a line cook at a local restaurant, living in a country where a minor traffic violation can trigger a life-altering chain of events underscores the harsh realities of our broken immigration system. As immigration case backlogs increase by the day, detention spells an ominous fate for those who are detained and deprived of their opportunity to be a contributing member of society. When we take hard-working individuals away from their communities and families merely to inflict pain and suffering, we must ask ourselves who we truly are as a nation. That's why we ask that ICE expediently provide the specific criteria used to determine its enforcement targets.

At the vanguard of uplifting justice, comity, and dignity, the CBC reiterates its strong opposition to this administration's cruel immigration policies and urges swift action to provide meritorious legal relief for those indefinitely detained.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



Karen Bass
Chair, Congressional Black Caucus



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Chair, CBC Immigration Working Group